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1 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. John M. Maury
Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT : Vietnam Polls

1. At the 1 September Sullivan Committee meeting I raised your query about the nature of and precise data gleaned through certain alleged polls in Vietnam now being discussed in Congress. There was a considerable amount of discussion on this question, most of it directly keyed to the Mankiewicz and Braden article that appeared (among other places) in the 1 September Washington Post.

2. Appended hereto is a copy of Saigon's reply to what is basically your question. As you can see, we simply do not know what Senators Young and McGovern or Messrs. Braden and Mankiewicz are referring to. At the 31 August noon briefing at the Department, correspondents were more or less deliberately sicked on Senator McGovern to see if they could make him be more precise about his alleged information. The "recent poll" which Messrs. Mankiewicz and Braden claimed was commissioned by the US Military Command and allegedly showed that "only five percent of those questioned wanted Americans to remain" sounds like a very bad garble of a Pacification Attitude Analysis System (PAAS) poll keyed to sampling attitudes on the current pace of US withdrawal. It would appear that whereas the bulk of those questioned answered that they thought the pace was either too fast, too slow, or about right, a small minority (around five percent) responded that they thought withdrawal was a bad idea and wanted the Americans to stay period.

3. The above may not be very helpful but it is the best we can do for the time being.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

MORI/CDE

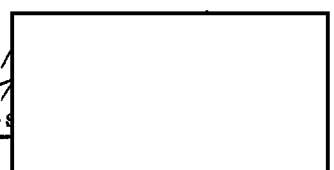
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State Dept. declassification &
release instructions on file

Attachments

SAIGON 14-188 (Stat. file)

Mankiewicz/Braden Article, 1 September Washington Post



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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 14188

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KATHMANDU EYES ONLY FOR AMB. BUNKER

SUBJ: COMMENTS OF SENATORS YOUNG AND MCGOVERN ON VIETNAM POLL

REF: STATE 141716

1. ALTHOUGH FIGURES DO NOT JIBE, BEST MISSION GUESS IS POLL CITED BY SENATORS YOUNG AND MCGOVERN IS PACIFICATION ATTITUDE ANALYSIS SYSTEM (PAAS) POLL FOR MAY OR JUNE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WARPED TO FIT SENATOR YOUNG'S INTERPRETATION. PAAS IS DESIGNED AS MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR CORDS ON TRENDS IN RURAL VIETNAMESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PACIFICATION. RESULTS OF PAAS GENERALLY CORRELATE WELL WITH INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES, BUT SYSTEM NOT IN OPERATION LONG ENOUGH FULLY VALIDATE FINDINGS. DATA NOT CLASSIFIED, BUT BECAUSE OF LIMITATIONS OF THESE POLLS AND OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITY TO GVN IT NECESSARY INFORMATION BE CLOSELY HELD.

2. IN MAY AND JUNE PAAS POLLS PEOPLE WERE ASKED WHETHER THEY WERE AWARE OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT 150,000 MORE US TROOPS WILL BE WITHDRAWN WITHIN ONE MORE YEAR. ALL BUT 29.8 PERCENT IN MAY AND 39.9 IN JUNE AWARE OF ANNOUNCEMENT. WHEN THOSE WHO KNEW OF THIS DECISION WERE ASKED WHY THEY THOUGHT IT WAS MADE, REASONS GIVEN BY MOST WERE A) ARVN NOW ABLE TO BEAR BURDEN OF WAR (38.2 AND 32.0 AND B) TO CARRY OUT POLICY OF VIETNAMIZATION (KQMU AND 15.4). WHEN ASKED WHETHER THIS WISE

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MOVE OR UNWISE MOVE HEAVY MAJORITY SAID WISE (58.6 AND 68.7) MAIN REASONS GIVEN FOR ANSWER IT WAS WISE MOVE WERE A) TAKES AWAY IMPORTANT PROPAGANDA ASSET OF VC (29.9 AND 35.1), B) PROMOTES VIETNAMIZATION (13.7 AND 21.2), C) WILL HELP PRODUCE RESULTS IN PEACE TALKS (11.2 AND 20.6, AND D) WITHDRAWAL WILL REDUCE FIGHTING AND KILLING IN VIET-NAM (18.9 AND 9.1).

3. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN QUERIED BY AP ON POLL AS CITED BY SENATOR MCGOVERN. ALTHOUGH INTERPRETATION BY TWO SENATORS IS NOT SUBSTANTIATED BY POLL QUESTIONS AND RESULTS, WE ARE FOLLOWING USG POLICY ON OVERSEAS POLLS (NOT ORDER FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER) BY NOT RELEASING RESULTS OF THIS OR ANY OTHER POLLS ON VIETNAMESE ATTITUDES. TO MAKE EXCEPTION WOULD ONLY HEIGHTEN CONTROVERSY, POSSIBLY COMPROMISE OUR ABILITY TO CONDUCT SUCH POLLS IN VIET NAM, AND OPEN OURSELVES TO CONTINUED REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RELEASE IN FUTURE.

4. IF QUERIED FURTHER BY PRESS HERE, WE WILL NOTE STANDING USG POLICY THAT OVERSEAS ATTITUDE POLLS ARE MANAGEMENT TOOLS INTENDED FOR INTERNAL USE TO ASSIST PLANNING, THAT WE DO NOT RELEASE RESULTS OF SUCH POLLS (IRRESPECTIVE WHETHER RESULTS FAVORABLE TO USG INTEREST OR NOT), AND THAT THEREFORE WE CANNOT CONFIRM STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO TWO SENATORS.
BERGER

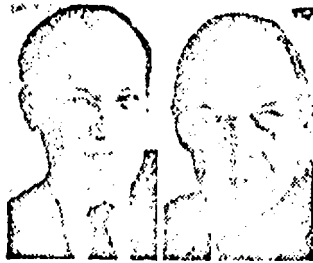
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Economic Disaster in South Vietnam

A MAJOR FAILURE of U.S. policy in Vietnam is being concealed by the Nixon administration. It is that the Saigon government is looking at an economic picture so bleak that many experts—Vietnamese as well as American—believe the Thieu-Ky government may fall well before any coalition is negotiated to take its place.

So embarrassed is our government by the evidence of the massive failure of our economic programs in Vietnam that it is restricting the evidence to a "need-to-know" level. On the very day that it was first reported in this space that a \$200 million economic aid program for Cambodia was in the works—to be headed by the same man who administered the disaster in Saigon—copies of the Saigon Post, an English-language daily regularly circulated to Washington officials, was stamped "Secret" in the State Department and its circulation limited.

The newspaper reported that the price of basic commodities in Vietnam had risen by an incredible 700 per cent in the last year in the cities.



Mankiewicz Braden

Indeed one prominent Vietnamese government official said recently—in a discussion about possible alternatives to a Thieu-Ky government—that he would not take the presidency if it were offered, because the economic plight of most of the people would force any government out of office.

JUST WHY the economy is in such bad shape, is an interesting story, and one that goes far to demonstrate why a recent poll in Vietnam, commissioned by the U.S. military command, showed that only 5 per cent of those questioned wanted Americans to remain. The cause lies in two areas over which the U.S. has considerable control. We can insist on a realistic devaluation of the Vietnamese currency,

the plaster, and we can eliminate the Commodity Import Program, a multi-billion dollar U.S. program that enriches the corrupt and aids the Vietcong.

First, the devaluation. The official rate is now set at 118 to the dollar. The black market rate—that is to say, the actual rate—is over 700 to the dollar. That is an enormous temptation to the GI, who must either have his pay artificially reduced or sell his dollars on the black market. It also means that U.S. dollars go from the bars and bordellos of Saigon—largely owned by the wives of Saigon's generals—to the black market, where they yield more plasters, to be converted into gold leaf to be smuggled out, or to find their way to the Vietcong to be used to buy weapons through Hong Kong or Bangkok.

OBVIOUSLY, the remedy is a devaluation. But a realistic one, which might set the official rate at, say, 600 to the dollar, would hurt not only the generals' wives but also the businessmen who are the backbone of Thieu's support as much as it would help the GI and the poor

Vietnamese. What is now being discussed in Saigon and Washington is a token devaluation to something under 250 to the dollar. This might look good, but it will solve nothing.

Second the Commodity Import Program. This is the heart of our economic policy in Vietnam. It provides U.S. taxpayers' money to enable Vietnamese importers—at the official rate of exchange—to buy luxury goods, such as television sets, cars, motor scooters and automatic calculating machines, in the United States. The goods are then resold, at the actual rate of exchange, to those Vietnamese who have become wealthy enough to buy them.

But no attention—and no money—is paid to support of production of charcoal, rice, fish sauce and soft pork—the staples of the Vietnamese "Silent Majority." And as refugees come to the cities, and these goods become produced and shipped by fewer people in more difficult circumstances, their price climbs out of sight. Suppression of that news will not make it go away.

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